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# United States Department of Agriculture,

2 U.S. BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

2A Seed and Plant Introduction and Distribution

50 WASHINGTON, D. C.

GRAIN INVESTIGATIONS

3

## WINTER BARLEY;

(*Hordeum vulgare*.)

This barley has been successfully grown in the Central States as far north as the southern portion of Iowa and Nebraska; in the Eastern States as far north as New York. The best climates are those with moderate summer heat and cool nights.

**Soils.**—Among the best soils are the prairie loams, although in the Northwestern States the soil derived from volcanic ash is specially adapted and produces the highest quality of grain. The land for barley should be plowed not less than 5 inches deep and a fine, mellow seed bed formed. Much of the success depends upon the condition of the seed bed. Barley is a shallow feeder and must have sufficient plant food in the upper five inches.

**Sowing.**—The best time to sow in the Central and Western States is not later than September 15; in the Eastern States barley sown as late as October 1 has been successful, although September sowing is recommended. The best method, when possible, is to drill the seed in 6 or 8 inch drills. This insures more even sowing and places the grain at a proper depth for successful germination, thus giving a more uniform stand. The grain can also withstand dry autumn weather better than when sown broadcast.

The quantity to sow varies with the condition and fertility of the soil. In the Western States, with their dry climate, 4 to 6 pecks is abundant when drilled in; if broadcasted, 5 to 7 pecks can be used. In the Central and Eastern States, with their more humid climate, 6 to 8 pecks are successfully used. Usually one peck more is used when broadcasted and harrowed.

Too thick sowing, while giving a heavy stand, produces imperfectly developed heads, the result being that the grain is smaller in size. The rule should be to plant no more seed than you believe there is plant food available to bring to maturity.

**Harvesting.**—The grain should be harvested as soon as the majority of the plants are ripe. This will be about the hard, dough stage. The method practiced in the Western States, where the greater portion of the brewing barley is raised, is to stack in narrow, conical stacks. This insures a bright-colored grain, color being one of the determining factors in the price. Discoloration does not, however, injure its feeding value. When stacking is impossible, the shocks should be carefully capped, then these thrashed by themselves and used for feeding. This will leave the brighter colored grain beneath to be sold in market. This will insure a better price than if all the grain is thrashed together.

**Uses of Barley.**—Winter barley is the most satisfactory nurse crop for grass, clover, or alfalfa. Because of its rapidity of growth, it does not shade the young plants as do oats. It matures quickly and can be removed before extreme hot weather arrives, giving the young plants time to become adapted. One bushel of barley to 10 pounds of clover or 12 to 15 pounds of alfalfa is usually used, the amount of legume seed varying according to localities. Two bushels of barley are frequently used in the irrigated regions, while on the Plains area 1 bushel gives the best results.

Barley planted in August is one of the best hogging crops known and has given excellent results in the Eastern States. The practice elsewhere is to be recommended.

Cut for hay while in the milk stage or before the awns harden, it yields an excellent, nutritious hay well adapted for all kinds of feeding. If let stand too long, the beards harden and become offensive and frequently injurious to animals.

**For Feed.**—Barley has nearly equal feeding value with corn with the exception of the fat. In regions where corn is not successful, barley can take its place for hogs on alfalfa or clover pasture. Ground or soaked barley fed in connection with skim milk produces the finest bacon for market. It is also fed successfully to sheep. For horses and cattle the barley should be ground or soaked and fed in connection with other feeds, using alfalfa or other hays for roughage. Successful feeding trials at various experiment stations have demonstrated the feeding value of barley.







